

News from Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ



Representing New York's 12th Congressional District • Brooklyn, Manhattan & Queens
Chairwoman, House Small Business Committee

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\$300,000 Approved for Gowanus Canal's Sponge Park

Washington, DC – The development of a “Sponge Park” along Brooklyn’s Gowanus Canal took another step forward this afternoon when the FY 2010 Interior and Environment Appropriations conference report was approved in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill included \$300,000 for the project, which will incorporate greenery along the banks of the Canal to manage excess runoff and help improve water quality. Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez (D-N.Y.) believes this innovative project will offer much-needed open spaces for the community while also improving the environmental conditions.

“Our neighbors living near the Gowanus Canal deserve a healthy environment, with plenty of public space where they can enjoy this urban waterfront. This project will decrease water pollution from surface runoff and bring long-term benefits to the beautiful and vibrant Brooklyn neighborhood,” Velázquez said.

The Gowanus Canal Conservancy first unveiled its design plans, which include a series of public waterfront spaces, in April 2008. The federal resources will help bring the Sponge Park to life by funding the installation of grass and other greenery along the sidewalks and on terraces bordering the Canal. The plants chosen for the area will absorb rainwater and naturally break down toxins. The strategies put in place will significantly decrease the amount of runoff entering the Canal and remediate contaminants in the water. By coupling the funds included in H.R. 2996 with the local group’s plan, this park will become an asset for the Brooklyn community.

“For decades, industrial and environmental pollution have plagued the Gowanus Canal. By joining together with community advocates and environmentalists, we can clean up the Canal and make this a better place for the working families who live in Brooklyn,” Velázquez said.

The FY 2010 Interior Appropriations conference report was approved in the U.S. House by a vote of 247-178. It will now go to the Senate for final approval before being signed into law by the President.

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